



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**STATE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM RELEASED FROM 15-YEAR
FEDERAL LAWSUIT**

HONOLULU — State Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. and Attorney General Mark Bennett announced today that the State of Hawaii received the order signed by Federal Judge David A. Ezra dismissing all remaining Department of Justice claims against Hawaii State Hospital and the State community mental health system. Effective November 30, 2006, the order ends over 15 years of federal oversight which began with a Department of Justice action against the State filed in 1991.

“This is a historic moment in the reform of state services for persons in our community with severe and persistent mental illness who need hospital care and community-based follow-up,” said Health Director Dr. Chiyome Fukino. “The state has made tremendous improvements in our mental health system and with the end of court oversight, we will continue to move forward to build on and improve the way these services are provided.”

“Previously, the court dismissed portions of the lawsuit involving conditions at Hawaii State Hospital, but this order brings the entire case to an end,” Attorney General Mark Bennett said. “This is truly an event about which the citizens of Hawaii can be proud.”

During the course of the litigation, a study released by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) ranked Hawaii as eleventh in the nation for mental health care (www.nami.org/grades). Hawaii improved from a position of 51st and was “applauded as most improved of any state” in the report.

Within the past five years, community mental health services have dramatically increased from serving about 4,500 adults with severe and persistent mental illness and adults experiencing an overwhelming crisis, to serving over 12,000 annually.

In October, Governor Linda Lingle announced the award of a federal Mental Health Transformation State Incentive grant to the Department of Health. The five-year grant will help provide momentum for the State's continued efforts to improve and expand public mental health services for the people of Hawaii.

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Hawaii State Department of Health Adult Mental Health Division Highlights since January 2003

The Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) administers a comprehensive integrated mental health system supporting the recovery of adults with severe and persistent mental illness and to adults experiencing an overwhelming crisis.

The following are notable AMHD highlights:

- January 2003: Chief District Judge David Ezra made the Plan for Community Mental Health Services an order of the court to supplement the Hawaii State Hospital Remedial Plan for Compliance to create an integrated public adult mental health system.
- February 2003: the 24-hour Access suicide and crisis telephone service was made available to all islands. During 2005 the line received a total of 84,951 phone calls.
- April 2003: the Hawaii Center for Evidence-Based Practice established by the AMHD and the UH departments of nursing, psychology, and social work to support evidence-based practices that is both recovery-focused and delivered in a culturally competent manner.
- May 2003: AMHD and VSA arts of Hawaii-Pacific held the first Abilities 2003 Art Show to reduce discrimination against people with mental illness by highlighting their artistic contributions.

Hawaii State Hospital opened its treatment mall providing comprehensive psychosocial rehabilitation services and full integration of treatment services across the hospital.

- June 2003: AMHD established its Office of Consumer Affairs and the Hawaii peer specialist training and certification program. The first peer specialist training was held in July 2003. Peer specialists are consumers who serve as mentors to other consumers. There are 85 Hawaii certified peer specialists in the islands thus far.
- October 2003: Access team members win the Governor's Award for Excellence. Hawaii received the \$3.5 million COSIG grant for integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and the Evidence-Based Practice Implementation Grant, a \$940,000 award to develop and evaluate evidence-based practices.
- May 2004: the AMHD held the First Annual Best Practices Conference, "Innovations in Dual Diagnosis." AMHD, in partnership with the University of Hawaii's MHSRET, present an annual three day international conference. Each year, the conference focuses on one of SAMHSA's Evidence-Based Practices. Concurrent sessions each focus on a different target audience. Invitees include consumers and their support persons, consumer advocacy organizations, and behavioral health providers at the level of line staff, clinical and medical leadership, and executive leadership.
- December 2004: the federal civil rights case against Hawaii and the Hawaii State Hospital is dismissed.

The AMHD begins participation in the Medicaid Rehabilitation Option reimbursement program. Since the AMHD sent out its first Medicaid Rehabilitation Option claim to the Hawaii State Med-QUEST Division in April 2005, the AMHD has received a total of \$2.4 million in FY05 and \$15.8 million in FY06.

- October 2005: the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations awarded the Hawaii State Hospital reaccreditation status.

Judge Ezra signed a Joint Stipulation and Order stating that the final portion of the federal court case against the State will be dismissed in November 2006. This final dismissal signifies the end of federal support and oversight since the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act lawsuit was filed in 1991.

- June 2005: Hawaii State Hospital staff was named the Department of Health Team of the Year for their work in bringing the Hawaii State Hospital out of the federal civil rights lawsuit.
- March 2006: a study released by the National Alliance on Mental Illness ranked Hawaii as eleventh in the nation for mental health care (www.nami.org/grades). Hawaii improved from a position of “dead last” 16 years ago to be “applauded as most improved of any state” in the report. The report acknowledged Governor Linda Lingle’s leadership to help “debunk the stigma” of mental illness and to move insurance parity for mental illness from legislation to law.
- Since April 2006: four 24-hour supervised cottages with a total of 24 beds were opened on the grounds of Hawaii State Hospital for consumers suitable for conditional release. Called Hale Imua, the project is a unique collaborative by state and private mental health service providers to reduce the patient population at the hospital.
- September 2006: the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded Hawaii the Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant. The grant awards \$2.19 million for the first year of a five-year period to transform the state’s mental health system to meet consumers’ and family members’ needs.
- October 24, 2006: Judge David Ezra held his last hearing for the case.
- November 30, 2006: Judge David Ezra dismisses federal lawsuit against Hawaii State Hospital and the state mental health system.